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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - FOREIGN MINISTER DESCRIBES EFFORTS TO
GET ASSISTANCE FOR THE TFG

¶1. (SBU) In an April 9 meeting, TFG Foreign Minister Omar, accompanied by Minister of Defense "Gandi," described a recent visit to Rome, and the state of his efforts to elicit financial support for the Sheikh Sharif government from the UAE, Iraq, and Kuwait. Rome, he said, had promised \$4 million the TFG joint security forces. Omar thought that the UAE, if lobbied by the USG, would be willing to offer substantially more. Omar said he would accompany TFG President Sharif on an April 17 - 19 visit to Turkey and an April 20 - 21 visit to Cairo in advance of the April 22 - 23 AMISOM/Somali security institutions Brussels donors conference. End summary.

Promising Noises from
the Middle East

¶2. (SBU) In an April 9 meeting, Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Foreign Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Omar, accompanied by Minister of Defense Mohamed Abdi "Gandi," reviewed what he said was evidence of the Arab world's commitment to the Djibouti Process. Although TFG President Sheikh Sharif had rejected a \$3 million monthly stipend offered by the Government of Qatar at the May 30 - 31 Arab League Summit, Omar thought optimistically that, in the end, Qatar would relax the "unacceptable" conditions it had tied to the provision of aid. (Qatar's aid was reportedly contingent on the TFG negotiating with some of its most uncompromising opponents.)

¶3. (SBU) Kuwait had offered no aid to the TFG at the Arab League event, Omar said, because its foreign minister had told Omar that his government did not want to appear to be publicly undercutting Qatar's insistence that TFG negotiate with its opponents by at the same time providing no-strings-attached assistance. Omar thought that USG backing could encourage Kuwait to provide meaningful assistance quickly.

¶4. (SBU) The most promising conversation on the margins of the Arab League Summit, Omar said, was with UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdallah who "did not blink" when Omar urged that the UAE provide as much as \$120 million to the TFG's efforts to stand up its security forces. Omar again thought it was critical that the U.S. urge the UAE to robustly back the TFG. He had urged unnamed USG officials to use the April 4 - 5 visit of Sheikh Abdallah to Washington to lobby for immediate assistance.

¶5. (SBU) The Government of Iraq had announced a \$5 million grant to the TFG at the Summit. Separately, Jordan had told the TFG that it was willing to sell, with USG authorization, certain military equipment, including four helicopters, if

funding could be obtained.

President Sheikh Sharif would also be seeking military aid, including equipment, during his April 17 - 19 visit to Turkey, Omar said. After Turkey, the President would travel to Cairo.

Italy and France Offer Military Training

¶6. (SBU) In meetings with Foreign Minister Frattini and other Italian officials, the Government of Italy committed, Omar said, to provide training to an unspecified number of joint security force officers at the Vicenza European Gendarmerie Force headquarters. An unspecified number of Somalis would also receive training by the Guardia di Finanza in order to better control port, airport, and other revenues. Finally, the GoI will announce \$4 million in aid to the joint security forces at the April 22 - 23 AMISOM/Somali Security Forces Brussels donors conference. Omar added parenthetically that he was unhappy that only \$30 million was being solicited for the joint security forces at the donors conference, while \$230 million was being sought for AMISOM. The TFG was critically underfunded in what the international community insisted was a "Somali-owned" process, he noted. He had expressed his unhappiness to UNPOS. (Note: UNPOS is currently considering adjusting the amounts solicited, perhaps by asking AMISOM to reduce the civilian component of its mission and having the AU access up to \$100 million from the EU Peace Facility.)

¶7. (SBU) Minister of Defense "Gandi" noted that in recent meetings he has had with the French MFA and minister of state for defense affairs an offer, made by Foreign Minister Kouchner during an earlier visit to Djibouti, to train Somali troops was reiterated. The training would begin in September, "Gandi" thought.

Comment

¶8. (SBU) Omar numerous times urged the U.S. to support the TFG's efforts to get assistance from countries --he mentioned the UAE, Kuwait, and Turkey-- with which it has much influence Omar noted that aid from the UAE could come more quickly and have fewer strings attached to it than assistance from western donors, making it all the more critical that the U.S. use its good offices quickly to help his cash-strapped transitional government.

RANNEBERGER